

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 6A

USA TODAY

Approved For Release 2005/12/14 : CIA-RDP91-00901R000600200026-5

Keep files on agents secret, CIA man says

CIA files on agents should be put off-limits to those using the Freedom of Information Act to declassify government secrets, deputy agency director John McMahon said Tuesday. Under the law, the CIA and other agencies must explain why certain information cannot be made available to the public. McMahon said it is impossible for the agency to provide "an iron-clad guarantee" that sources and methods used to obtain intelligence are protected. "It is difficult ... to convince one who is secretly cooperating with us that some day he will not awaken to find in a U.S. newspaper or magazine an article that identified him as a U.S. spy."

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 10

NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

22 June 1983

WHAT ELSE IS**NEWS****METRO****CIA guards secrets**

Washington (UPI)—The CIA asked Congress yesterday for exemption from Freedom of Information Act requirements that the agency said could endanger the lives of agents and informants.

But CIA Deputy Director John McMahon told the Senate Intelligence Committee that the proposed exemptions would not apply to information that could reveal coverups of illegal behavior by the spy agency.

ARTICLE DELETED
ON PAGE 2AWASHINGTON TIMES
22 June 1983

BRIEFLY / Capital

CLA asks FOIA exemption

The CIA asked Congress yesterday for exemption from Freedom of Information Act requirements that the agency said could endanger the lives of agents and informants.

But CIA Deputy Director John McMahon told the Senate Intelligence Committee that the proposed exemptions would not apply to information that could reveal cover-ups of illegal behavior by the spy agency, promising, "There will not ever again be a repeat of the improprieties of the past."

The CIA was rocked by disclosures in the mid-1970s that it engaged in illegal spying against domestic dissident groups.

The bill sought by the CIA and backed by the administration and committee Chairman Barry Goldwater, R-Ariz., would exempt the agency from having to search its extensive operations files before turning down requests on security grounds.

C.I.A. Seeks Protection Against Opening Files

WASHINGTON, June 21 (AP) — The Central Intelligence Agency recommended today that its files on intelligence agents be placed completely off limits to people using the Freedom of Information Act in efforts to declassify Government secrets.

John McMahon, the agency's deputy director, said that under the current system of declassification it was impossible for the agency to provide "an iron-clad guarantee" that sources of intelligence and methods used to obtain it were protected.

He testified in support of a bill pushed by Senator Barry Goldwater, Republican of Arizona, chairman of the Intelligence Committee, and Senator Strom Thurmond, Republican of South Carolina, chairman of the Judiciary Committee.

At a rare public meeting of the intelligence panel, Mr. McMahon said, "It is difficult to convince one who is secretly cooperating with us that some day he will not awaken to find in a U.S. newspaper or magazine an article that identified him as a U.S. spy."

WASHINGTON POST
22 June 1983ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE A-8

CIA Seeks To Avoid File Scrutiny

By George Lardner Jr.
Washington Post Staff Writer

The CIA campaigned on Capitol Hill yesterday for what it described as a modest "compromise" that would put all of its operational files beyond the reach of the Freedom of Information Act.

What constitutes an "operational" file would be determined by the director of the CIA and, according to CIA officials at least, such designations would not be subject to court review.

The CIA's deputy director, John N. McMahon, and a contingent of high-ranking colleagues from Langley testified enthusiastically in favor of the proposal at a hearing before the Senate Intelligence Committee yesterday afternoon.

"We have struck an arrangement that borders on acceptability in CIA," McMahon said of the bill, which has been introduced by Intelligence Committee Chairman Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz.) and Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Strom Thurmond (R-S.C.).

He said he would still prefer a "total exemption" for all the agency's files, but he said the agency was willing to settle for something that he said would comport "with the spirit" of the freedom of information statute.

The CIA's deputy general counsel, Ernest Mayerfeld, said the proposal also should undercut more than half of the 77 FOIA lawsuits pending against the agency for denying records under the current law. Mayerfeld predicted that 22 of the lawsuits would be dismissed outright and most of the documents sought in 24 other cases would be taken out of reach.

The bill, which would be retroactive, would enable the CIA to refuse even to search the "operational files" in the agency's directorate of operations, the directorate of science and technology and office of security.